

DNREC to host Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission public hearing May 17 on proposed addendum to eel fisheries management plan

DOVER – DNREC's Division of Fish & Wildlife will host an Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) public hearing on Draft Addendum V to the commission's Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Eels at 6 p.m., Thursday, May 17 in DNREC's Auditorium, 89 Kings Highway, Dover, DE 19901.

Since the ASMFC implemented Addendum IV in 2014, member states including Delaware have raised concerns about the management program. Currently, the yellow eel fishery is managed to meet an annual coastwide landings cap of 907,671 pounds, and evaluated against two management triggers: (1) the coastwide cap is exceeded by more than 10 percent in a given year; or (2) the coastwide cap is exceeded in two consecutive years, regardless of the percent overage. If either trigger is met, state-by-state quotas are required. In 2016, landings exceeded the coastwide cap by less than 10 percent. If landings in 2017 exceed the coastwide cap, state-by-state quotas must be implemented. Some member states are concerned about these provisions, given the uncertainty in the landings data.

The ASMFC initiated Draft Addendum V to address these concerns, and to consider a number of possible changes to the current management program: the coastwide cap, management triggers, state-by-state allocations, and quota transfer provisions for the yellow eel commercial fishery, as well as the current Maine glass eel commercial quota and the

aquaculture provisions of the plan. If approved, the proposed alternatives to the current management program would be implemented starting in the 2019 fishing season.

Since the four management issues related to the yellow eel fishery – coastwide cap, management trigger, state-by-state allocations, and quota transfers – are linked, the public is encouraged to specify their preferred alternatives for each issue.

Anglers and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on Draft Addendum V, either by attending the public hearing or providing written comment. Public comment will be accepted until 5 p.m. Friday, June 15, and should be mailed to Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland Street, Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; faxed to 703-842-0741, or emailed to comments@asmfc.org, subject line: Draft Addendum V.

The draft addendum is posted online at http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/DraftAddendumV_PublicComment_April2018.pdf, or on the Commission website, www.asmfc.org, under Public Input.

For more information about the Dover ASMFC hearing, please contact DNREC's Fisheries Section at 302-739-9914.

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